

The Athenian Mercury.

Quest. 1. **W**hy Old Age is generally desired?
 Answ. 'Tis not so much Old Age, as Longer Life, we desire; and therefore chuse the Inconveniences of one, only for the Good of the other.

Quest. 2. Whether Dr. Sherlock be Dean of St. Paul's, de Facto or de Jure?

Answ. Both. As their Majesties are King and Queen; nor does the Dr. any where in his Famous Book affirm the contrary.

Quest. 3. Was the use of Wine unknown to the Antidiluvian World?

Answ. We see no Reason to believe it was; *Ars longa, vita brevis*, passes for an undeniable Maxim in our World; but it held not in that, where their extraordinary longevity gave them such great advantages, both for the accidental invention, and rational improvements of all useful Knowledge. Now the Life of Man, and his natural Happiness being one of the chiefest things all provide for, 'tis very probable they would take all the care possible to make it run as easy as they could, especially when they were given over to such a general Sensuality, that they minded nothing beyond it; but the whole Earth was corrupt before God. Nor is it so easy to be imagined, how the whole World could be so entirely Debauch'd without letting Wine come in for a share in't; especially Wine being a thing so easily invented, and almost dropping of its own accord out of the Grape.

Further, that 'twas in use before the Deluge, seems rather favoured than denied in the case of Noah, Gen. 9. 20, 21. Noah began to be an Husbandman, and he planted a Vineyard; and he drank of the Wine, and was Drunken. Some would, to excuse the Patriarch, have us believe he was unacquainted with the use and nature of Wine, it being newly invented, and so unwittingly drank to Intoxication. But there's no need of this, though a good Man, he was but a Man; and as such might be guilty of an Infirmary, as Lot was afterwards of one of a much fouler Nature. Noah, 'tis said, began (after the Flood) to be an Husbandman, and planted a Vineyard; from which Place we may as well argue, he invented Husbandry, which we know was as old as the Fall; God saying then to Adam, Thou shalt till the Ground from whence thou wert taken.

Quest. 4. Whether the Lives of the Patriarchs were really as long as we generally think 'em, and whether we are to reckon their Ages by Solar or Lunar Years?

Answ. That they were much longer in the first Ages than since, Experience and Holy Writ teaches us, from the gradual decrease of their Years till Jacob's or perhaps David's time; near which they have since stood, Threescore and Ten, or Fourscore being the Age of an Old Man now, as 'twas then. Profane Authors also have not omitted to remark it;

Terra malos Homines nunc educat atque pusillos.

Says one of them, denoting their Degeneracy. That we are to reckon the Lives of the Antidiluvians by Solar and not Lunar Years, appears to a Demonstration, both from this Observation already made, and from the Impossibility of fixing the Period where the supposed account should be first chang'd from Lunar to Solar, which else would be very ridiculous. For Moses when he went to deliver Israel, must be but Six Years Old: Jacob when an old Man, and about Seventy Children and Grand-children, at his going in before Pharaoh, but Ten Years Old. And some of the Antidiluvian Patriarchs, particularly Mahaleel and Enoch, little more than Five Years old each, and but Children themselves when they begat Sons and Daughters; as will easily appear to any who will be at the pains to divide the number of their Years by 12, which will very near reduce the Solar into the Lunar. On this Head may be well enough introduced a pretty Observation some have made on the Ages of the Patriarchs, that those lived longest, who married latest: Jared who lived an 162 Years before he begat Enoch, reaching in all to 262; and Methuselah, who lived 187 Years before he begat Lamech,

not dying till he was 959. This observation we own pleasant, but not Solid; both because the Patriarchs might be Married some Years before they had Children, and because (which is the surer Reason) Lamech lived 182 Years ere he begat Noah; and yet dyed at 777. One thing more ere we dismiss this entertaining Subject; though Methuselah lived most Years of all the Patriarchs, yet we can't properly call him the Oldest Man amongst them: For granting Adam created in the fullness of Strength and Vegetate Manhood, which all allow, the lowest time of which we must place in those Ages about 60, and adding to this his 930 Years, which he actually lived, we may reckon him 990 when he died; at which rate, he was 21 Years older than Methuselah.

Quest. 5. Whether we may suppose the People before the Flood, exceeded those after; as much in Stature and Strength as in Longevity?

Answ. If the Giants and Mighty Men spoken of in the Sixth of Genesis, are to be understood in the Common Sense which the words seem to bear, it may appear probable, that the generality of Men were not such before the Flood, for they seem to be excepted from the rest of the World. There were Giants in the Earth in those Days, about the Birth of Noah, and also after that; suppose near or in the Flood, their Race being destroyed by it, unless in any accidental Monstrous Instances, which afterwards happened. This is observable, that we read of no Giants after the Flood but among the posterity of Curshed Cham, Goliath, and the rest of the Philistines coming from Mizraim, and the Anakims from Canaan, Gen. 10.

Quest. 6. Are there any such Creatures as Pigmies?

Answ. Just as much as Satyrs, both of them being only of the Monkey kind, some greater, as Drills and other Creatures discovered in the Woods of Africa and Asia, near the Cape, and in other Places; of which see the Figures in Ogilby, and other Writers; some less, not above two Foot high, whose Skeleton pretty well resembles a Mans; and some of them are shewn as such to those who understand no better.

Not that we'd be thought to deny that there are Men exceeding little (pardon the Solecism) and yet exact and perfectly form'd, as are some of the Seraglio Dwarfs, and such as we have formerly had common enough in the Court of England; though now as much out of Fashion, as Fools and Fardingals. But what we affirm is this, That there is no such determinate distinct Nation, nor ever was, in Being; nor are they any where to be found, unless among the Severites and Severinghi, or in the same Latitude with Pliny's People of No-Mouths, who lived only by the smell of Fruits and Flowers.

Quest. 7. What was the World made of?

Answ. Pre-existent matter: The Judicious Reader may perhaps start at the first appearance of so strange a notion; but we doubt not he'll be of another Mind, as soon as we have explained the Terms, and in what Sense we take both the World and pre-existent matter. By World, we mean the orderly frame of visible things; by pre-existing matter, we mean a Chaos, when the Earth was without form, and void; or as Ovid calls it, *Rudis, indigestaque Moles*. In the beginning, God created the Heaven and the Earth. This Heaven must be the highest of all, the Seat of the Blessed, because not the Visible Heaven we behold; the Seat of the Sun and Moon, and Stars, since we read of this Firmament, or rather Expanse some time after Created. Then comes the Earth, such a Mass as is described, without Beauty, without Order; and therefore could not, while it continued such, be properly stiled *κοσμος*, *Mundus*, or the World; but may well enough be considered as pre-existent matter, in respect of what 'twas afterwards. Any other pre-existent matter we deny, and know 'tis impossible to prove it, and absurd to attempt it. If such matter, it must be Eternal, which either makes two Eternals, or matter it self to be God, both of which suppositions are purest Nonsense. Again, the step out of such Disorder into so regular and lovely a Frame, seems little less, perhaps is really greater, than out of not Being at all, into actual Being. 'Twas God who produced this change, as the Querist supposes; asking what the World was made of? which implies it made not it self: Nor will we thank him

him for such a grant, for it is impossible for meer matter properly or of it self, to act or produce any rational Operation.

Quest. 8. *Whether the Pentateuch were written by Moses?*

Ans. There's more depends on this Question, than appears at first sight; *Spinosa*, *Mr. Hobs* and others of the same Religion, not daring publickly to set themselves against the Authority of the Scriptures, for fear of having their Tongues Bored, or their Cheeks Branded, have gone a more cunning way to work, denying their Antiquity, in order to lessen their Authority, as indeed they would go a fair length towards both, could they once persuade us that these Five Books were composed long after *Moses* his time, as well as those which follow them long after the matters contained therein were really transacted. However by their leaves we must take the Affirmative in this great Question, and in order to establish the Truth, shall first produce what proof we have for our own Opinion, then answer their Objections against it; and lastly examin their contrary Hypothesis, and prove the falshood and absurdity thereof.

We prove then, that these Five Books were really written by *Moses*; 1st. From the Universal Traditional Testimony both of Jews, Christians and Heathens, much more than we have for *Homer's*, *Pindar's*, *Virgil's*, *Confutius's* Works, which from a single, narrow, national Tradition, we so firmly believe to be theirs whose Names they bear, that a Man would deserve no other Answer but Laughter who affirm'd the contrary. The Jews and Christians none will dispute us: The Antient, very antient Heathens affirm as much. *Orpheus* himself, or if not he, one allowedly very antient, mentions him, his Works, his very Name, as clearly as it could be expressed in Greek, (*Ὀσφορηνος*), and that as a Lawgiver, (*δὲ νόμος*), and quotes out of him the same things we now find in the Writings which bear his Name.

But we have infinitely a more sure word of Prophecy, and are able to demonstrate in this case, as well as several others, that those who believe *Hobs*, must deny our Saviour; for 'tis he who expressly and frequently appeals to the Books of *Moses*, the Canon being long before that time fixed as 'tis now, as our Adversaries own. They have *Moses* and the Prophets, says our Saviour; no, they have not *Moses*, says *Mr. Hobs*, only a parcel of Law and History drawn up in his Name by no Body knows who: *Utrum horum?* And had but *Dives* read the *Levite*, though he was not so happy to be born when the World was enlightened with so profound an Oracle, he might easily have rejoyn'd upon *Abraham*, and still pressed for some more extraordinary Arguments to convert his Brethren, those he had produced not being authentick, nor sufficient for that purpose. Again, in another place, what did *Moses* command, why was this asked, if not unanswerable? So *St. Luke* 24. 27. Beginning at *Moses* and all the Prophets; and to add no more, *St. Mark* 12. 26. Have ye not read in the Book of *Moses*, how in the Bush God spake unto him; whereas according to those Gentlemen, they might have answered, No, they had never read it in the Book of *Moses*, only in that of *Ezra*. Further, we are able to prove Three of those Books at least quoted as his. *Exodus* is called the Book of *Moses* in the place just mentioned; and again in *Heb.* 9. 19. *Leviticus* is said to be the Writing of *Moses*, *Rom.* 10. 5. *Deuteronomy* in the 7th of the *Acts* and the 37, or what is equivalent, Texts are taken from thence, whereof *Moses* is affirmed to be the Author.

Their Objections against this Hypothesis, are the several Passages as they fancy in these Writings, which agree not to the time of *Moses*; the chief are these following. *Gen.* 13. 7. And the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the Land; whence they'd argue, they dwelt not there now, when this was written; and therefore the Book of *Genesis* composed after the Canaanites were expell'd. Of the same Nature is that Expression unto this Day, (though this rather belongs to the succeeding Books, *Joshua*, *Judges*, &c. being rarely if ever found in the Pentateuch.) For, say they, were not the time wherein those things were transacted long pass'd, it were not proper for the Historian to say things continued in such or such a State, till this day. Another Argument is *Moses* his Speaking of himself as a third Person, commending, discommending, &c. which they think he'd not have done had he wrote himself. Another, the naming of Places, particularly *Dan*, which was not so called till many Years, nay Ages after. Another, the Death of *Moses* being described in the last Chapter; and lastly, the coherence and connexion between those Books, and the succeeding, as far as *Ezra*. And thus we have endeavour-

ed fairly to represent the strength of their Objections, whereunto we give these following, and we hope satisfactory Answers.

And first, should we grant that the High Priests or Scribes in every Age, having the keeping of the Sacred Canon, made what literal or verbal Additions or Alterations they thought fit, as directed by the Spirit of God, to render them more plain and intelligible to the Church, for whose use they were written: This would without more ado clear all the Controversy. But we think there's no need of making use of this general Shield, while we are able to put by every particular Stroke which has been made at the Antiquity of these Books. The first is the Canaanite and the Perizzite were then in the Land; whence they'd argue, they were not so at the Writing the History; but we deny that to be a fair way of reasoning: That Particle then relating not always to time present, but sometimes to the time past, and that as properly as the other.

Thus we may well enough say, supposing in the time of *William Rufus*, the Normans were then in the Land, referring to their not having been so before, or of such or such a Year before pass'd; supposing one had lived in 65. the Plague was then in the City, not at all affirming it not there when we spoke it. Now we find good reason for this Expression, the Canaanite was then in the Land. *Gen.* 12. 8. because of what follows, The Lord said, unto thy Seed will I give this Land; it being a Commendation of the Faith of *Abraham*, that he believed what was promised when so little likelihood thereof. Again *Chap.* 13. ver. 17. There was a Strife between *Abraham's* and *Lot's* Herdmen, and the Canaanite dwelled then in the Land. The Inconvenience and Scandal of their Strife being insinuated, when they were among such ill Neighbours; for which Reason too, *Abraham* might urge concord between them, and says, Let there be no Strife, for we are Brethren?

The Second Expression, Unto this Day, signifies an undetermined space of time, more or less, and may as well and as fairly be applied to a short time as a long one. Thus 'tis said of *Rahab* the Harlot, She her self, not her Family, She dwelleth in Israel unto this day, *Josh.* 6. 25. which therefore could, not be long after the time wherein the thing happened.

As for *Moses* his speaking of himself, in the Third Person, so does *St. John*, and many other Writers, nothing being more common. As for his Commending, Dispraising himself, &c. it argues the authority, simplicity and impartiality of his Writings. As for his naming Places as they were long after called, we may without violence affirm it a propheticall Prolepsis; for why mayn't Names of Places, as well as Things be spoken of by Prophecy, to make the thing prophesied more unquestionable when it begins to be fulfilled? as *Cyrus* and others. For the addition of a few Lines at the latter end of *Deuteronomy*, giving an account of his Death, that indeed might be added by succeeding Governors, *Joshua* or *Eleazer*, as a Postscript, though the rest all his own Writing.

But then they argue from the Connexion and Coherence between the different Books, both these Five, and the succeeding, that they were all the work of one Hand; which leads to the examining their Hypothesis, which they advance instead of the old one, namely, that after the Destruction of the Temple, all the Copies of the Holy Books were burnt; when, says the Apocrypha, *Esdra* or *Ezra*, by the strength of Memory recovered them again word for word; say these Men, he out of all the Sacred Books composed what we have now, giving the first Five the name of *Moses's*, to gain them the higher Authority, and adding the rest as he thought fit. But neither can this hold, because this Story of *Ezra* is all Apocryphal, and much more what they build upon it; because there were several Copies of these Books written out for the King, and probably too for the Levites and Expounders of the Law in their Cities and Synagogues: Because the Book of *Moses* is mentioned expressly, both in the *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*. Because we find in the Writers after the Captivity, several Chaldee Words, and almost whole Chapters, but not so in the Pentateuch, &c. Because the Samaritans had, and still have the Pentateuch, though they had nothing to do with the Jews after their Captivity. Lastly, Because the Ark of God is described in some of those Books, viz. 2 *Chron.* 5. 9. as then, when the Book was writ, continuing in the same posture it was when removed by *Solomon*; They drew out the Staves of the Ark, and there they are unto this day; but neither Staves nor Ark, as 'tis notoriously known, continued under the Second Temples. And as for the Connexions, they might be made as the Postscript of *Deut.* before mentioned.